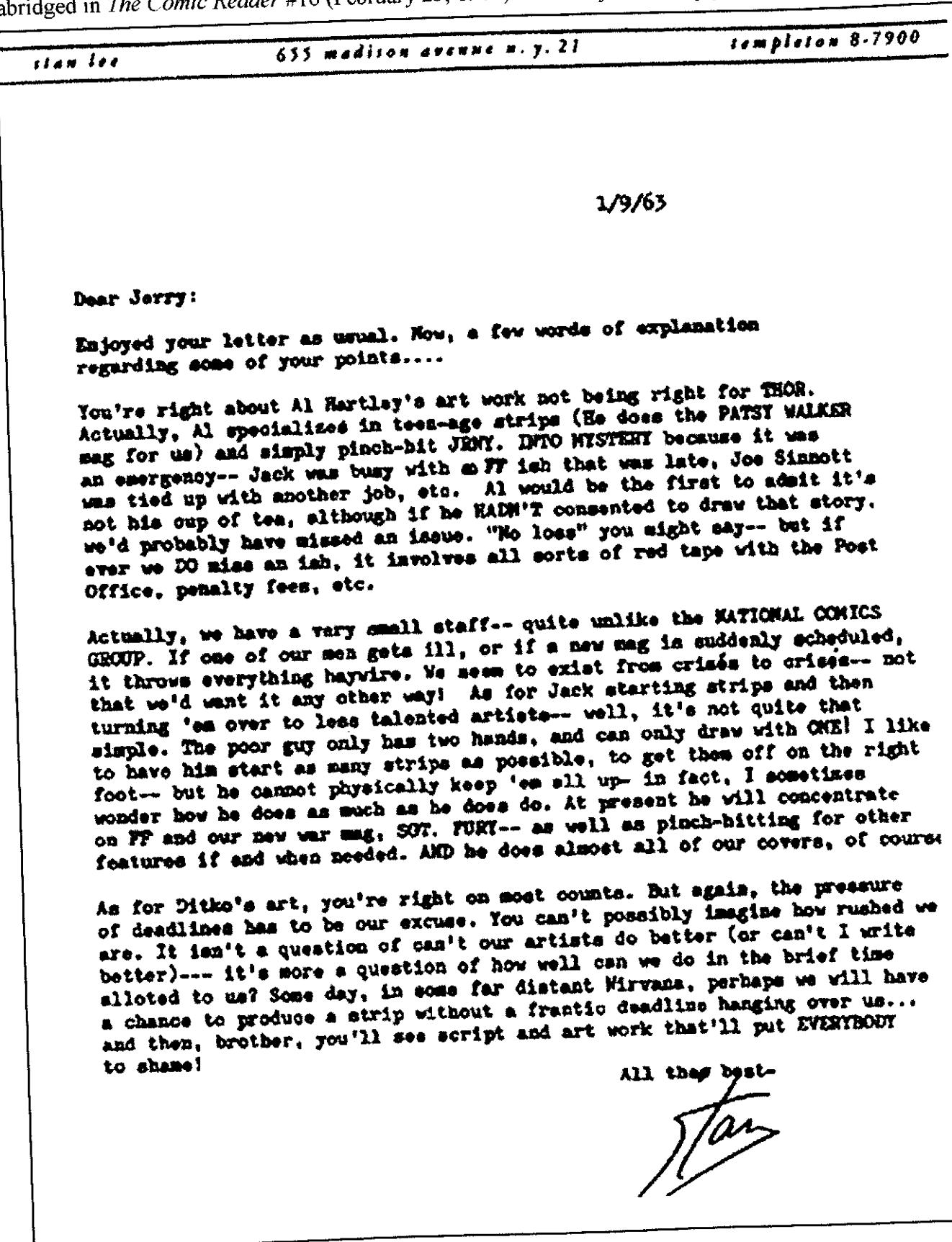


EXHIBIT 27



Stan Lee letter to Jerry Bails (January 9, 1963): This very candid Stan Lee letter was written before the explosive popularity of Marvel comics that would soon follow. The letter was printed slightly abridged in *The Comic Reader* #16 (February 23, 1963) with Jerry Bails' reply (next page).



PS:

You ask for news of future plans--

Well, we have a new character in the works for STRANGE TALES (just a 5-page filler named DR. STRANGE-) Steve Ditko is gonna draw him. Sort of a black magic theme. The first story is nothing great, but perhaps we can make something of him-- 'twas Steve's idea, and I figured we'd give it a chance, although again, we had to rush the first one too much. Little sidebar: Originally decided to call him MR. STRANGE, but thought the MR. bit too similar to MR. FANTASTIC-- now however, I just remember we had a villain called DR. STRANGE just ~~xxxxxx~~ recently in one of our mags-- hope it won't be too confusing! Oh well...

FF is easily our favorite book here at the Marvel bullpen. It's my baby and I love it. People have asked for original scripts-- actually, we don't even HAVE any. I write the story plot-- go over it with Jack-- he draws it up based on our hasty conferences-- then, with his drawings in front of me, I write the captions and dialogue, usually right on the original art work! It seems to work out well, although it's not a system I'd advise anyone else to try. ---We get dozens of letters a day asking for FF puppets, T-shirts, membership pins, records, everything-under-the-sun---- it really seems to have attracted some very loyal fans. The THING seems to be becoming one of the favorite characters, and the YANCY STREET GANG a standing gag with lots of fans-- at least 6 # letters a day signed THE Y.S.GANG!

ANT-MAN seemed to need a shot in the arm, so we added the WASP as A.M.'s partner. Hope she'll help. THOR goes his merry way with a seemingly devoted circle of fans, and I'm inclined to think we'll be playing up life in ASGARD more and more as the issues go by. As for SPIDER-MAN, I wouldn't be surprised if he turns into a real winner, judging by the mail ~~xxk~~ we're receiving-- tremendous enthusiasm from the readers.

Mail-- that's my biggest problem. I take it too damn seriously-- read each and every letter-- wish I could answer 'em all-- we get over a hundred a day-- sometimes over 500!!! (after a long week-end). Can't keep up with it. Fans keep asking for MORE letters pages-- wish we didn't have ANY! It's like a tiger by the tail-- can't let go-

Can't really tell about our new plans, because they change from day to day. We play it by ear-- and base many decisions on comments from our mailbag. But, hope the above may have been somewhat helpful-- back to FF now--

S,

From *The Comic Reader* #16 (February 23, 1963): Below is Jerry Bails' reply to Stan Lee's letter.

((Well, Stan, you can always use TCR to answer your hundreds of loyal fans in a more personal way than possible in the pages of your mags. Thanks a million for this wonderful letter.))